

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program needs more volunteers

For those of you who have been with the Air Force during tax season, whether here at Kirtland AFB or almost any other base worldwide, you know that one of the benefits to being attached to the military this time of year is being able to have your income tax returns prepared free of charge. Not only do the tax returns get prepared, they also get filed electronically, so you can have your refund in about two weeks or less.

The only practical way to make a large-scale pro-

gram like this work is to enlist the aid of volunteers through an Internal Revenue Service-sponsored program like the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.

Through the VITA program, volunteers are trained using IRS-provided instructional materials, and tax returns are prepared and filed electronically using IRS-provided software.

Each year, the key to a successful program is the number of people who volunteer. With sufficient numbers, the Kirtland AFB

tax program is virtually assured of success. Without the numbers, however, the opposite is true.

Volunteer preparations for the 2002 tax season have already begun, with the first training class having completed its course. Two more training classes are planned for January. No special background is required to sign on as a volunteer.

A class is scheduled to be held Jan. 14-16, covering not only the fundamentals of tax preparation, but also the basics of using the tax software.

On Jan. 24, a three-hour seminar is scheduled to be given covering the various considerations involved in preparing income tax returns for the

State of New Mexico.

Because of base exercises during this week, not all volunteers will be able to attend this particular class. However, those not affected by the exercises are encouraged to attend.

The second class will be held the following week. The IRS tax and software portion will be held Jan. 21-23 and the State of New Mexico tax seminar is scheduled to be held Jan. 24.

An IRS-sponsored online training course will be operational shortly after the first of the year. Once enrolled (at no cost), trainees will be able to study and progress at their own pace and on their own time.

Once trained, volunteers need to commit to a minimum of 40 hours of

work, but more volunteer hours are needed.

Many of the volunteers will prepare tax returns at their own workstations on base. Others will work at the main tax center in the 377th Air Base Wing Headquarters, in the south side of Building 20604, at 2000 Wyoming Boulevard Southeast at M Avenue. Enter at the door on the south end of the building near the legal office.

In every case, a preliminary assessment of each client's tax return will be made, so that each volunteer is assigned work that matches his or her training and experience level.

Perhaps the bottom line in a program like this, just like a savings program, is that the greater the investment, the greater the return. The more TEAM KIRTLAND invests in the VITA program, the more specific individuals and the base as a whole will get back out of it. Potential volunteers, including military retirees, are encouraged to contact John Ford at 853-1715 or email him at john.ford-@kirtland.af.mil.

Kirtland Fire Department serves Christmas dinner

Right: Kirtland Fire Department, with help from Albuquerque Fire Department, served Christmas dinner to 831 people from a local shelter. Families and individuals were bussed on base to a holiday party at which donated toys and other gifts were distributed and Santa visited children.



Photo by Dennis Carlson



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Flu shots

Flu shots are available to active duty personnel, active duty dependents, retirees and dependents and DOD eligible employees.

The flu shots will be administered at the 377th Medical Group Clinic.